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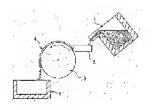
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(54) RARE EARTH MAGNETIC ALLOY SHEET, ITS MANUFACTURING METHOD, SINTERED RARE EARTH MAGNETIC ALLOY POWDER, SINTERED RARE EARTH MAGNET, METAL POWDER FOR BONDED MAGNET, AND BONDED MAGNET



(57)Abstract:

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To provide a rare earth magnet excellent in magnetic properties by suppressing fine R rich phase regions in a cast R-T-B system alloy ingot to obtain an alloy ingot having a very homogenized system for the purpose of evenly distributing the R rich phase in a magnet.

SOLUTION: The surface of a casting roll 3 is roughened finely so that a liquid alloy 1 cannot enter the roughened fine surface of the roll by its viscosity. As a result, the casting die surface side of an alloy 4 is not cooled quickly, and the growth of the fine R rich phase is suppressed.

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CLAIMS

[Claim(s)]

[Claim 1] The alloy flake for rare earth magnets with which thickness is 0.1mm or more 0.5mm or less, and surface roughness of at least one side of this alloy flake is characterized by 5-micrometer or more being 50 micrometers or less by the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz) in the alloy flake for rare earth magnets which consists of a R-T-B system alloy (however, the transition metals with which at least one sort and T make Fe indispensable, and B are boron among the rare earth elements in which R contains Y.).

[Claim 2] The alloy flake for rare earth magnets according to claim 1 with which surface roughness of at least one side of this alloy flake is characterized by 7-micrometer or more being 25 micrometers or less by the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz).

[Claim 3] The alloy flake for rare earth magnets according to claim 1 or 2 characterized by the rate of the volume of the detailed R rich phase field in an alloy being 20% or less.

[Claim 4] The manufacture approach of the alloy flake for rare earth magnets characterized by setting surface roughness of the casting side of the roll kneader

for casting to 5 micrometers or more 100 micrometers or less by the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz) in the manufacture approach of the alloy flake for rare earth magnets which consists of a R-T-B system alloy by the strip cast method.

[Claim 5] The manufacture approach of claim 1 characterized by setting surface roughness of the casting side of the roll kneader for casting to 5 micrometers or more 100 micrometers or less by the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz) in the manufacture approach of the alloy flake for rare earth magnets which consists of a R-T-B system alloy by the strip cast method thru/or the alloy flake for rare earth magnets given in 3.

[Claim 6] The manufacture approach of the alloy flake for rare earth magnets according to claim 4 or 5 characterized by setting surface roughness of the casting side of the roll kneader for casting to 10 micrometers or more 50 micrometers or less by the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz). [Claim 7] Alloy powder for rare earth sintered magnets produced by carrying out jet mill grinding after giving a hydrogen crushing process to claim 1 thru/or the alloy flake for rare earth magnets given in 3.

[Claim 8] The rare earth sintered magnet manufactured with powder-metallurgy processing from the alloy powder for rare earth magnets according to claim 7. [Claim 9] claim 1 thru/or the alloy flake for rare earth magnets given in 3 -- using -- HDDR -- the alloy powder for bond magnets manufactured by law. [Claim 10] The bond magnet produced using the alloy powder for bond magnets according to claim 9.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[Detailed Description of the Invention] [0001]

[Field of the Invention] This invention relates to the alloy powder for the alloy flake for rare earth magnets which consists of a R-T-B system alloy (however, the transition metals with which at least one sort and T make Fe indispensable, and B are boron among the rare earth elements in which R contains Y.), its manufacture approach, the alloy powder for rare earth sintered magnets, a rare earth sintered magnet, and bond magnets, and a bond magnet. [0002]

[Description of the Prior Art] In recent years, as an alloy for rare earth magnets, the Nd-Fe-B system alloy is lengthening the volume rapidly from the high property, and is used for the object for HD (hard disk), the object for MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), or various motors. Usually, what permuted a part of Nd by other rare earth elements, such as Pr and Dy, and the thing which permuted a part of Fe with other transition metals, such as Co and nickel, are common, and is named generically the R-T-B system alloy including the Nd-Fe-B system alloy. Here, R is at least one sort in the rare earth elements containing Y. moreover, the transition metals with which T makes Fe indispensable -- it is -- a part of Fe -- Co or nickel -- it can permute -- as an alloying element -- Cu, aluminum, Ti, V, Cr, Mn, Nb, Ta, Mo, W, calcium, Sn, Zr, Hf, etc. -- one sort -- or two or more sets are seen and you may add. B is boron and can permute a part by C or N.

[0003] A R-T-B system alloy makes the main phase the crystal which consists of

R2T14 B phase which is a ferromagnetic phase which contributes to a magnetization operation, it is the alloy with which the R-rich phase of the low-melt point point which rare earth elements condensed by nonmagnetic lives together, and, generally the dissolution and casting are performed in a vacuum or inert gas from it being an activity metal. Moreover, in order to produce a sintered magnet with powder-metallurgy processing from the cast R-T-B system alloy lump After grinding an alloy lump to 3-micrometer (FSSS: measurement by Fischer subsieve sizer) extent and making it alloy powder, It sinters at an about 1000-1100-degree C elevated temperature with a sintering furnace, the need is accepted after that, and it heat-treats and machines, press forming is carried out all over a magnetic field, it plates in order to improve corrosion resistance further, and usually it considers as a sintered magnet.

[0004] In the sintered magnet which consists of a R-T-B system alloy, the R-rich phase is bearing the important following roles.

- 1) The melting point is low, serves as the liquid phase at the time of sintering, and contributes to improvement in magnetic densification, therefore magnetization.
- 2) Lose the irregularity of a grain boundary, decrease the new chestnut ESHON site of a reverse magnetic domain, and heighten coercive force.
- 3) Insulate the main phase magnetically and increase coercive force.

Therefore, if the distributed condition of the R-rich phase in the fabricated magnet is bad, it will become important in local poor sintering and the magnet which imitated the magnetic fall and was fabricated for the ** reason that the R-rich phase is distributing to homogeneity. Distribution of an R-rich phase is greatly influenced here in the organization of the R-T-B system alloy lump at the time of being cast.

[0005] Moreover, another problem produced in casting of a R-T-B system alloy is that alpha-Fe generates in the cast alloy lump. Alpha-Fe will bring about the fall of magnetic magnetic properties, if aggravation of the efficiency of comminution at the time of grinding an alloy lump is brought about and after sintering remains

in a magnet. So, in the conventional alloy lump, the homogenization covering long duration was performed at the elevated temperature if needed, and alpha-Fe was eliminated.

[0006] In order to solve the problem which alpha-Fe generates in this cast R-T-B system alloy lump, as an approach of casting an alloy lump in a quicker cooling rate, the strip cast method (it abbreviates to the SC method.) is developed, and it is used for the actual process. By casting a sink and an about 0.1-1mm flake for a molten metal on the copper roll with which water cooling of the interior was carried out, the SC method can carry out the rapid solidification of the alloy, and can control the deposit of alpha-Fe. In order that an alloy lump's crystalline structure may furthermore make it detailed, an R-rich phase becomes possible [generating the alloy which has the organization which distributed minutely]. Thus, since the internal R-rich phase is distributing minutely, the dispersibility of the R-rich phase in the magnet after grinding and sintering also became good, and the alloy cast in the SC method has succeeded in improvement in magnetic magnetic properties. (JP,5-222488,A, JP,5-295490,A)

[0007] Moreover, the alloy lump cast by the SC method is excellent also in the homogeneity of an organization. The homogeneity of an organization can be compared in the state of distribution of the diameter of crystal grain, or R rich phase. in the alloy flake produced by the SC method, although a chill crystal may be generated in the roll side for casting of an alloy flake (it turns on a mold side side henceforth), rapid solidification is also hung down as a whole -- a detailed and homogeneous organization can be obtained moderately.

[0008] As mentioned above, since R rich phase distributes minutely and generation of alpha-Fe is also controlled, the R-T-B system alloy cast in the SC method can prevent grinding which the homogeneity of R rich phase in a final magnet increases, and originates in alpha-Fe, and the evil to magnetism, when producing a sintered magnet. Thus, the R-T-B system alloy lump which cast in the SC method has the organization which was excellent in order to produce a sintered magnet. However, a raw material alloy lump's organization is

increasingly asked for homogeneous improvement as a magnetic property improves.

[0009] Therefore, the technique which is producing the sintered magnet with a good magnet property is indicated by JP,10-317110,A by making the rate of surface ratio of the chill crystal by the side of the mold side of the cast R-T-B system alloy 5% or less, for example. Since the chill crystal section serves as detailed powder with a particle size of 1 micrometer or less at a grinding process, the particle size distribution of alloy powder are disturbed and it is thought that magnetism is worsened.

[0010]

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention] this invention persons found out that it was important to control the distributed condition of R rich phase rather than an alloy lump's diameter of crystal grain, in order to control the grain size of the alloy powder for sintered magnets to homogeneity, as a result of studying the relation between the organization of the cast R-T-B system alloy lump, and the behavior in the case of a hydrogen crack or pulverizing. And the rate of the volume of the chill crystal in an alloy lump was several % or less actually, and in order for the direction of the field (detailed R rich phase field) where the distributed condition of R rich phase generated at the mold side side in an alloy lump is extremely finer than the evil by the chill crystal to control the grain size of the powder for magnets, effect found out the large thing. That is, even when the chill crystal in a R-T-B system alloy lump was lessened according to an alloy lump's presentation and manufacture conditions, also when the rate of the volume of a detailed R rich phase field exceeded 50%, it checked that a certain thing and this detailed R rich phase field disturbed the particle size distribution of the alloy powder for magnets, and checked that it was required in order that decreasing a detailed R rich phase field may raise a magnet property.

[0011] Then, by controlling generation of the detailed R rich phase field in the inside of the cast R-T-B system alloy lump, and manufacturing the alloy lump which has the organization excellent in homogeneity, this invention makes

homogeneity distribution of R rich phase in a magnet, and aims at offering the rare earth magnet which was excellent in the magnet property.

[0012]

[Means for Solving the Problem] this invention persons changed the surface state of the casting conditions in the SC method, especially the roll kneader for casting, and compared the rate of the volume which the detailed R rich phase field in a R-T-B system alloy flake generates. Then, it found out that it was related to the rate of the volume which the surface roughness of the mold side side front face of an alloy flake and a detailed R rich phase field generate, this invention persons succeed in this invention based on the above-mentioned knowledge.

[0013] Namely, this invention is set to the alloy flake for rare earth magnets which consists of a (1) R-T-B system alloy (however, transition metals with which at least one sort and T make Fe indispensable among the rare earth elements in which R contains Y and B boron.). The alloy flake for rare earth magnets with which thickness is 0.1mm or more 0.5mm or less, and surface roughness of at least one side of this alloy flake is characterized by 5-micrometer or more being 50 micrometers or less by the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz).

(2) The alloy flake for rare earth magnets given in the above (1) to which surface

- (2) The alloy flake for rare earth magnets given in the above (1) to which surface roughness of at least one side of this alloy flake is characterized by 7-micrometer or more being 25 micrometers or less by the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz).
- (3) The above (1) characterized by the rate of the volume of the detailed R rich phase field in an alloy being 20% or less, or the alloy flake for rare earth magnets given in (2).
- (4) The manufacture approach of the alloy flake for rare earth magnets characterized by setting surface roughness of the casting side of the roll kneader for casting to 5 micrometers or more 100 micrometers or less by the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz) in the manufacture approach of the alloy flake for rare earth magnets which consists of a R-T-B system alloy by the strip cast method.

- (5) The above (1) characterized by setting surface roughness of the casting side of the roll kneader for casting to 5 micrometers or more 100 micrometers or less by the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz) in the manufacture approach of the alloy flake for rare earth magnets which consists of a R-T-B system alloy by the strip cast method thru/or the manufacture approach of the alloy flake for rare earth magnets given in (3).
- (6) The above (4) characterized by setting surface roughness of the casting side of the roll kneader for casting to 10 micrometers or more 50 micrometers or less by the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz), or the manufacture approach of the alloy flake for rare earth magnets given in (5).
- (7) Alloy powder for rare earth sintered magnets produced by carrying out jet mill grinding after giving a hydrogen crushing process to the alloy flake for rare earth magnets the above (1) thru/or given in (3).
- (8) The rare earth sintered magnet manufactured by the above (7) with powdermetallurgy processing from the alloy powder for rare earth magnets of a publication.
- (9) the alloy flake for rare earth magnets the above (1) thru/or given in (3) -- using -- HDDR -- the alloy powder for bond magnets manufactured by law.
- (10) The bond magnet produced by the above (9) using the alloy powder for bond magnets of a publication.

It comes out.

[0014]

[Embodiment of the Invention] The reflection electron image when observing the cross section of the flake of the Nd-Fe-B system alloy (Nd31.5 mass %) cast by the conventional SC method in SEM (scanning electron microscope) is shown in drawing 1. In drawing 1, left-hand side is a mold side side, and right-hand side is a free-surface side. In addition, the surface roughness of the mold side side front face of this alloy flake is 3.4 micrometers in the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz). The small pool of the form where the white part at drawing 1 had the directivity which is extended in the shape of lamellar one in the

thickness direction from the center section of the alloy flake by the free-surface side (front face of a casting side side and the opposite side), or lamellar one divided with the Nd-rich phase (an R-rich phase is called a Nd-rich phase since R is Nd.) is formed. However, to the mold side side, the field where a Nd-rich phase is extremely more detailed than other parts and which exists at random granular was generating, this invention persons named this the detailed R rich phase field (in case the principal component of R is Nd, it is also called a detailed Nd rich phase field), and we decided to distinguish especially. This detailed R rich phase field usually began from the mold side side, and spreads out in the direction of a center. On the other hand, suppose that the part in which the detailed R rich phase field applied to a free-surface side from a center section does not exist is called the normal section here.

[0015] In the hydrogen crushing process of the R-T-B system alloy flake at the time of sintered magnet production, hydrogen is absorbed from R rich phase, expands, and serves as a weak hydride. Therefore, in a hydrogen crack, into an alloy, R rich phase was met or the detailed crack on the basis of R rich phase is introduced. Since an alloy breaks at a subsequent pulverizing process taking advantage of a lot of detailed cracks generated by the hydrogen crack, the grain size after pulverizing tends to become fine, so that distribution of R rich phase in an alloy is fine. therefore, with the alloy powder with which the inclination to be divided more finely than the normal section was strong with powder, for example, was manufactured from the normal section, a detailed R rich phase field With the alloy powder manufactured from the detailed R rich phase field to average grain size being about 3 micrometers in measurement by FSSS (Fischer sub sheave sizer), since the rate containing fines 1 micrometer or less is high, the particle size distribution after pulverizing will become large.

[0016] The controllable thing is indicated by JP,09-170055,A or JP,10-36949,A by control of the cooling rate after the molten metal at the time of casting solidifies the distributed condition of R rich phase in a R-T-B system alloy, or heat treatment. However, unlike the normal section, control is difficult, distribution of R

rich phase cannot become coarse easily, and the behavior of change of the cooling rate after coagulation or R rich phase inside the detailed R rich phase field by heat treatment is still detailed.

[0017] The rate of the volume of a detailed R rich phase field is measurable by the following approaches. Although drawing 3 is the reflection electron line image of the same visual field as drawing 1, a line is drawn on a detailed R rich phase field and the boundary of the normal section. Since the boundary of both fields can be easily judged from the distributed condition of R rich phase, it can calculate the rate of area of the detailed R rich phase field of the visual field using image-analysis equipment. The rate of area in a cross section is equivalent to the rate of the volume in the inside of an alloy. In addition, in measurement of the rate of the volume of a detailed R rich phase field, even if it is the alloy flake cast by coincidence, change of the amount of a detailed R rich phase field is large also between flakes and within the same flake. Therefore, the rate of the volume of the detailed R rich phase field of the whole alloy is calculable by measuring the flake of about 5-10 sheets, and taking the average, after extending an observation visual field for an about 50 to 100-time low scale factor. [0018] The reflection electron line image of the cross section of the R-T-B system alloy flake (Nd31.5 mass %) of this invention is shown in drawing 2. In drawing 2, left-hand side is a mold side side, and right-hand side is a free-surface side. The description of the alloy flake of this invention is that generation of a detailed R rich phase field is controlled by controlling the surface roughness by the side of a mold side in the flake manufactured by the strip cast method. As shown in drawing 2, in the alloy flake of this invention, a detailed R rich phase field does not exist, but is crossed to a free surface from a mold side at a mold side side, and the distributed condition of R rich phase is very homogeneous. [0019] The surface roughness of the mold side side front face of the alloy flake manufactured by the strip cast method and the relation of a detailed R rich phase field can be explained as follows. In order for the mold side side front face of an alloy flake to be smooth, the roll kneader front face for casting needs to be

smooth, and wettability with an alloy molten metal needs to be good. In such the condition, heat transfer from a molten metal to mold is fitness (a heat transfer coefficient is large) very much, and it quenches the mold side side of an alloy too much. It is thought that a detailed R rich phase field has the strong inclination generated when the heat transfer coefficient of mold and a molten metal is large and it quenches the mold side side of an alloy too much.

[0020] On the other hand, if fine unevenness is formed in the front face of the roll kneader for casting, for the viscosity of the molten metal of an alloy, a molten metal cannot enter into the fine unevenness on the front face for casting of a roll kneader completely, but a non-contacted part will be produced, and a heat transfer coefficient will fall. Consequently, quenching the mold side side of an alloy too much is lost, and it is thought that generation of a detailed R rich phase field can be controlled. If surface roughness on the front face for casting of a roll kneader is enlarged here, since the unevenness will be imprinted somewhat at the mold side side of an alloy flake, naturally the surface roughness of the mold side side front face of an alloy flake also becomes large. The cause that generation of R rich phase is controlled with the alloy flake which has surface roughness with a suitable mold side side front face is presumed because too much heat transfer in case a molten metal solidifies as mentioned above is controlled.

[0021] However, if the surface roughness on the front face for casting of a roll kneader becomes large too much, while a molten metal can enter now into surface unevenness and a heat transfer coefficient will become large again, the surface roughness by the side of the mold side of the generated alloy flake becomes still larger. In this case, the rate of the volume of a detailed R rich phase field also comes to increase again.

[0022] Although the alloy flake which has a homogeneous organization as shows drawing 2 also by the conventional SC method was contained to some extent, since the flake which included the detailed R rich phase field as shown in drawing 1 so much will also be generated by coincidence, the problem had been

produced in the homogeneity of the organization in the whole alloy as a result. It is thought that dispersion of an alloy organization produced by such conventional SC method originates in the difference in the contact condition of roll surfaces, such as a surface state of the delicate roll kneader for casting, a supply condition of a molten metal, and an ambient atmosphere, and a molten metal. On the other hand, in this invention, since unevenness of the suitable magnitude for the front face of the roll kneader for casting was formed, too much heat transfer in case a molten metal solidifies is lost, and generation of a detailed R rich phase field can be controlled with sufficient reappearance. Consequently, the alloy flake which has a homogeneous organization as shows drawing 2 can be manufactured now with high yield.

[0023] Furthermore, the detail of this invention is explained.

(1) Strip cast method this invention relates to the R-T-B system alloy flake for rare earth magnets cast in the strip cast method. Here, casting by the strip cast method of a R-T-B system alloy is explained. The mimetic diagram of the equipment for casting by the strip cast method is shown in drawing 4. Usually, a R-T-B system alloy is dissolved in a vacuum or an inert gas ambient atmosphere using the refractories crucible 1 for the activity property. The molten metal of the dissolved alloy is supplied to the roll kneader 3 for casting by which water cooling was carried out in the interior through the tundish 2 which established the rectification device and the slag removal device if needed, after time amount maintenance of predetermined is carried out at 1350-1500 degrees C. The speed of supply of a molten metal and the rotational frequency of a roll kneader are made to control suitably according to the thickness of the alloy for which it asks. Generally, the rotational frequency of a roll kneader is made into peripheral velocity, and is 1 - 3 m/s extent. Copper or a copper alloy is suitable for the quality of the material of the roll kneader for casting from the point that thermal conductivity is good and acquisition is easy. Since metal tends to adhere to the front face of the roll kneader for casting depending on the quality of the material of a roll kneader, or the surface state of a roll, if cleaning equipment is installed if

needed, the quality of the R-T-B system alloy cast will be stabilized. The alloy 4 solidified on the roll kneader secedes from a roll in the opposite side of tundish, and is recovered by the uptake container 5. The condition of the organization of R rich phase of the normal section is controllable by preparing heating and a cooler style in this uptake container.

[0024] As for the thickness of the alloy flake of this invention, it is desirable to be referred to as 0.1mm or more 0.5mm or less. If the thickness of an alloy flake is thinner than 0.1mm, a coagulation rate will increase too much, and since the diameter of crystal grain becomes fine too much and becomes near the pulverizing grain size in a magnet chemically-modified degree, there is a problem of causing the magnetic rate of orientation and the fall of magnetization.

Moreover, if the thickness of an alloy flake is thicker than 0.5mm, problems, such as a fall of the dispersibility of the Nd-rich phase by coagulation rate fall and a deposit of alpha-Fe, will be caused.

[0025] (2) In surface roughness this invention of the casting side of the roll kneader for casting, when casting a R-T-B system magnet alloy in the strip cast method, set surface roughness of the casting side of the roll kneader for casting to 5 micrometers or more 100 micrometers or less by the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz). Surface roughness is JIS here. B It is what was measured on the conditions shown in 0601 "the definition of surface roughness, and a display", and the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz) is defined in it. A measuring plane is asked for the curve (granularity curve) which removed the surface waviness component longer than predetermined wavelength from the cut end (cross-section curve) when cutting at a right-angled flat surface with the phase compensation mold high-pass filter etc. concrete first. From that granularity curve, only criteria die length is sampled in the direction of that average line, and the sum of the average of the absolute value of the altitude (Yp) of the summit of the mountain from the highest summit of the mountain to [from the average line of this sampling part] the 5th and the average of the absolute value of the altitude (Yv) of the bottom of thread from the lowest bottom

of thread to the 5th is called the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz). As for measurement parameters, such as criteria die length, the certified value is specified by Above JIS to surface roughness. The surface roughness by the side of the mold side of an alloy flake may have large fluctuation, it should measure it about the flake of at least five sheets, and it should use the average. By 5 micrometers or less, the uneven effectiveness on the front face for casting of a roll kneader is not acquired for surface roughness, but since contact to a molten metal is good, a heat transfer coefficient is large. Consequently, it becomes easy to generate a detailed R rich phase field in an alloy. On the other hand, since it is the viscosity of an alloy molten metal as the surface roughness of the roll kneader for casting is 5 micrometers or more, a molten metal cannot enter into fine unevenness of the front face of a roll kneader completely, but a noncontacted part is produced, and a heat transfer coefficient falls. Consequently, generation of the detailed R rich phase in the inside of an alloy can be controlled. Surface roughness is still more desirable in it being 10 micrometers or more in the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz).

[0026] Since spacing between uneven will generally also become large while the uneven depth on the front face of a roll kneader increases if the surface roughness of the roll kneader for casting exceeds 100 micrometers, a molten metal can enter without a clearance along the front face of a roll kneader.

Therefore, a coefficient of heat-transfer tends to become large too much again, and it becomes easy to generate a detailed R rich phase field in an alloy.

Therefore, the surface roughness of the roll kneader for casting sets 100 micrometers or less to 50 micrometers or less preferably.

[0027] In surface roughness this invention of a R-T-B system alloy flake, surface roughness of at least one side of the R-T-B system alloy flake for rare earth magnets is characterized by 5-micrometer or more being 50 micrometers or less by the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz). In case the field where unevenness of the above-mentioned granularity is formed in a front face is cast in the strip cast method, it is a mold side side front face where coagulation starts,

and it turns into a front face where unevenness of the front face of a roll kneader was reflected. The rate of the volume which a detailed R rich phase field generates [the surface roughness of this front face] by 5 micrometers or less or 50 micrometers or more becomes large, and the ununiformity of the distributed condition of R rich phase in an alloy is brought about as described above. Consequently, since the particle size distribution of the alloy powder after pulverizing are made large by the production process of a sintered magnet and a magnetic property is got worse, it is not desirable. In this invention, the surface roughness of one side of an alloy flake sets still more preferably 5 micrometers or more 50 micrometers or less to 7 micrometers or more 25 micrometers or less. [0028] In rate this invention of the volume of the detailed R rich phase field in an alloy, the rate of the volume of the detailed R rich phase field in a R-T-B system alloy becomes 20% or less. Consequently, since the particle size distribution of the alloy powder after pulverizing become what gathered narrowly at the process of a sintered magnet, the homogeneous sintered magnet which does not have variation in a property can be obtained.

[0029] From the alloy flake for rare earth magnets which consists of a R-T-B system alloy cast by manufacture approach this invention of the alloy powder for rare earth sintered magnets, and a rare earth sintered magnet, the anisotropy sintered magnet of a high property can be manufactured through the process of grinding, molding, and sintering.

[0030] Grinding of an alloy flake is usually performed in order of a hydrogen crack and pulverizing, and the alloy powder of 3-micrometer (FSSS) extent is produced. Here, a hydrogen crack is divided into the dehydrogenation process of the hydrogen absorption process of a last process, and a back process. At a hydrogen absorption process, the alloy flake itself is minutely broken by the hydrogen gas ambient atmosphere of the pressure of 266hPa - 0.3 MPa-G using mainly carrying out occlusion of the hydrogen to the R-rich phase of an alloy flake, and an R-rich phase carrying out cubical expansion by R-hydride generated at this time, or a countless detailed crack is produced. Although this

hydrogen absorption is carried out in about ordinary temperature -600 degree C, in order to enlarge cubical expansion of an R-rich phase and to break it efficiently, while making the pressure of a hydrogen gas ambient atmosphere high, it is desirable to carry out in about ordinary temperature -100 degree C. The desirable processing time is 1 hours or more. In atmospheric air, in order that R-hydride generated according to this hydrogen absorption process may be unstable and may tend to oxidize, it is desirable after hydrogen absorption processing to perform dehydrogenation treatment which holds an alloy flake in a vacuum 1.33hPa or less at about 200-600 degrees C. It can be made to change with these processings to stable R-hydride in atmospheric air. The desirable processing time of dehydrogenation treatment is 30 minutes or more.

Dehydrogenation treatment can also be excluded when the ambient atmosphere management for antioxidizing is made at each process from after hydrogen absorption to sintering.

[0031] It is the description that R rich phase is carrying out homogeneity distribution of the R-T-B system alloy flake manufactured by the strip cast method of this invention. Generally the average of desirable spacing of R rich phase is 3 micrometers to 8 micrometers, although it is dependent on the grinding grain size in a magnetic production process. In a hydrogen crack, a crack is introduced with R rich phase as the starting point along with R rich phase. Therefore, it is possible to pull out in an alloy homogeneity and the effectiveness of R rich phase distributed minutely by pulverizing, after carrying out a hydrogen crack to the maximum extent, and it is possible to produce efficiently alloy powder with very narrow particle size distribution. When a sintered magnet is produced without performing the process of this hydrogen crack, the property of the produced sintered magnet becomes what was inferior. (M.Sagawa et al. Proceedingof the 5th international conferenceon Advanced materials, Beijing China(1999))

[0032] Pulverizing is grinding a R-T-B system alloy flake to 3-micrometer (FSSS) extent. As grinding equipment for pulverizing, productivity is good, and since

narrow particle size distribution can be acquired, jet mill equipment is the optimal. If an alloy flake with few detailed R rich phase fields of this invention is used, particle size distribution are efficient and can produce narrow alloy powder with sufficient stability. The ambient atmosphere at the time of pulverizing is made into inert gas ambient atmospheres, such as argon gas and nitrogen gas. The oxygen below 1 mass % may be made to mix preferably below 2 mass % into these inert gas. While the efficiency of comminution improves by this, the oxygen density of the alloy powder after grinding can be set to 1000-10000 ppm, and alloy powder can be stabilized moderately. Moreover, abnormality growth of the crystal grain at the time of sintering a magnet to coincidence can also be controlled.

[0033] When casting the above-mentioned alloy powder all over a magnetic field, in order to reduce friction with alloy powder and a metal mold wall, and to also reduce friction of powder and to raise a stacking tendency, it is desirable to add lubricant, such as zinc stearate, to powder. A desirable addition is 0.01 to 1 mass %. Although before pulverizing or the back is available for addition of lubricant, it is desirable to use a V type blender etc. and to fully mix in inert gas ambient atmospheres, such as argon gas and nitrogen gas, before shaping among a magnetic field.

[0034] Press molding of the alloy powder ground to 3-micrometer (FSSS) extent is carried out with the briquetting machine in a magnetic field. Metal mold is produced in consideration of the direction of a field in a cavity combining magnetic material and nonmagnetic material. The molding pressure force has desirable 0.5 - 2 t/cm2. The field in the cavity at the time of molding has desirable 5-20kOe. Moreover, although the ambient atmosphere at the time of molding has desirable inert gas ambient atmospheres, such as argon gas and nitrogen gas, in the case of the above-mentioned fine particles which carried out anti-oxidation processing, it is possible also in atmospheric air. Moreover, the false hydrostatic-pressure press (RIP:Rubber Isostatic Press) using cold isostatic pressing (CIP:Cold Isostatic Press) or a rubber die is also possible for shaping. In CIP or

RIP, since it is compressed in hydrostatic pressure, there is little turbulence of the orientation at the time of shaping, the increment in the rate of orientation is more possible than metal mold shaping, and the maximum magnetic energy product can be increased.

[0035] Sintering of a molding object is performed at 1000-1100 degrees C. As an ambient atmosphere of sintering, an argon gas ambient atmosphere or the vacuum ambient atmosphere of 1.33x10 to 2 or less hPa is desirable. The holding time in sintering temperature has 1 desirable hours or more. before [moreover,] reaching sintering temperature in the case of sintering -- molding -- it is necessary to remove the hydrogen contained in lubricant and alloy powder in the living body as much as possible The desirable removal conditions of lubricant are holding 30 minutes or more at 300-500 degrees C in the vacuum of 1.33x10 to 2 or less hPa, or decompressed Ar flow ambient atmosphere. Moreover, the desirable removal conditions of hydrogen are holding 30 minutes or more at 700-900 degrees C in the vacuum of 1.33x10 to 2 or less hPa.

[0036] Since it is improvement in coercive force of a sintered magnet after sintering is completed, it can heat-treat at 500-650 degrees C if needed. The desirable ambient atmosphere in this case is an argon gas ambient atmosphere or a vacuum ambient atmosphere, and the desirable holding time is 30 minutes or more.

[0037] Moreover, the R-T-B system alloy flake for rare earth magnets which controlled generation of the detailed R rich field produced by this invention can be used suitably also because of production of a bond magnet in addition to a sintered magnet. Below, the case where a bond magnet is produced from the alloy flake for rare earth magnets of this invention is explained.

[0038] The R-T-B system alloy flake of this invention is heat-treated if needed first. the purpose of heat treatment -- removal of alpha-Fe in an alloy, and crystal grain -- big and rough -- it is-izing. Although HDDR (Hydrogenation Disproportionation Desorption Recombination) processing is performed in production of the alloy powder for bond magnet production, in HDDR down

stream processing, alpha-Fe which exists in an alloy cannot be made to eliminate, but becomes the cause of reducing magnetism. Therefore, before alpha-Fe performs HDDR processing, it is necessary to eliminate it.

[0039] Moreover, the mean particle diameter of the alloy powder for bond magnets is very large as compared with 50-300 micrometers and the alloy powder for sintered magnets. By the HDDR method, it is in agreement with the fixed distribution with the crystal orientation of the original alloy, and bearing of the recombined submicron crystal grain. Therefore, if the crystal grain with which two or more crystal orientation in the alloy flake of a raw material differs is contained in one alloy powder for bond magnets, into alloy powder, the field where crystal orientation differs greatly will be included, the magnetic rate of orientation will fall, and the maximum magnetic energy product will fall. The larger one is [the diameter of crystal grain in an alloy flake] convenient in order to avoid this. Since there is an inclination for the diameter of crystal grain to become comparatively small with the alloy cast in a rapid solidification method like the strip cast method, big-and-rough-izing of the crystal grain by heat treatment is effective in improvement in a magnet property.

[0040] There are many reports about the manufacture approach of the alloy powder for bond magnets by the HDDR method (for example, T.Takeshita et al, Proc.10th Int. Workshop - RE magnets and theirapplication, Kyoto, Vol.1 p551 (1989)). Production of the alloy powder by the HDDR method is performed as follows.

[0041] If the R-T-B system alloy flake of a raw material is heated in a hydrogen ambient atmosphere, the R2T14 B phase of a magnetic phase will decompose into the three phase circuit of alpha-Fe, RH2, and Fe2B at 700 to about 850 degrees C. Subsequently, if it changes to an inert gas ambient atmosphere or a vacuum ambient atmosphere and hydrogen is removed at comparable temperature, the decomposed phase recombines with the R2T14 B phase which has the diameter of crystal grain which is submicron extent. under the present circumstances, every recombined when a presentation and processing

conditions of an alloy were controlled suitably -- the easy axis (R2T 14 B-phase C shaft) of R2T14 B phase becomes almost parallel to C shaft of the R2T14 B phase in the raw material alloy before decomposition, and can be used as the anisotropic-magnet powder to which the direction of an easy axis of each fine crystal grain was equal.

[0042] After grinding to about 50-300 micrometers and considering as alloy powder, it mixes with resin and the alloy which performed HDDR processing gives compression molding, injection molding, etc., is used as a bond magnet and can carry out things.

[0043] A detailed R rich phase field has the strong inclination which carries out pulverization in the case of HDDR processing as well as the above-mentioned hydrogen crack processing. The property of the magnetic powder by the HDDR method falls while grain size becomes small. Therefore, the R-T-B system alloy which controlled generation of the detailed R rich phase of this invention can be used suitable for production of the magnetic powder for bond magnets in HDDR processing.

[0044]

[Example] (Example 1) So that an alloy presentation may become Nd:31.5 mass %, B:1.00 mass %, Co:1.0 mass %, aluminum:0.30 mass %, Cu:0.10 mass %, and remainder iron Alumina crucible was used for the raw material which blended metal neodium, ferroboron, cobalt, aluminum, copper, and iron, by argon gas, in the ambient atmosphere of one atmospheric pressure, it dissolved with the RF fusion furnace, the molten metal was cast in the strip cast method, and the alloy flake was produced. The diameter of the roll kneader for casting was 300mm, the quality of the material was a pure copper, water cooling of the interior is carried out and the surface roughness of a casting side was adjusted to 20 micrometers by the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz). The peripheral velocity of the roll at the time of casting is 0.9m/s, and generated the alloy flake with an average thickness of 0.30mm.

[0045] The surface roughness of the mold side side front face of the obtained

alloy flake was 10 micrometers in the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz). After embedding ten alloy flakes and polishing them, the reflection electron line image (BEI) was photoed by one 100 times the scale factor of this about each alloy flake with the scanning electron microscope (SEM). When uptake measurement of the taken photograph was carried out to image-analysis equipment, the rate of the volume of a detailed R rich phase field was 3% or less. [0046] (Example 2) The alloy presentation used the raw material blended so that it might become Nd28.5%, B:1.00 mass %, Co:1.0 mass %, aluminum:0.30 mass %, Cu:0.10 mass %, and remainder iron, cast in the SC method on the same conditions as an example 1, and produced the alloy flake.

[0047] As a result of estimating the obtained alloy flake as an example 1 similarly, the surface roughness of a mold side side front face was 9 micrometers in the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz), and the rate of the volume of a detailed R rich phase field was 3% or less.

[0048] (Example 1 of a comparison) The raw material was blended with the same presentation as an example 1, and the dissolution and casting by the SC method were carried out like the example 1. However, the surface roughness on the front face for casting of a roll kneader was 3.0 micrometers in the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz). As a result of estimating the obtained alloy flake as an example 1 similarly, the surface roughness of a mold side side front face was 3.3 micrometers in the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz), and the rate of the volume of a detailed R rich phase field was 41%.

[0049] (Example 2 of a comparison) The raw material was blended with the same presentation as an example 1, and the dissolution and casting by the SC method were carried out like the example 1. However, the surface roughness on the front face for casting of a roll kneader was 120 micrometers in the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz). As a result of estimating the obtained alloy flake as an example 1 similarly, the surface roughness of a mold side side front face was 86 micrometers in the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz), and the rate of the volume of a detailed R rich phase field was 29%.

[0050] Next, the example which produced the sintered magnet is explained. (Example 3) The hydrogen crack was carried out and the alloy flake obtained in the example 1 was pulverized with the jet mill. The conditions of the hydrogen absorption process which is a last process of a hydrogen crushing process were considered as maintenance with a hydrogen ambient atmosphere and two atmospheric pressures 100% for 1 hour. The temperature of the piece of a metal at the time of hydrogen absorption reaction initiation was 25 degrees C. Moreover, the conditions of the dehydrogenation process which is a back process were considered as maintenance at 500 degrees C in the 0.133hPa vacuum for 1 hour. After doing 0.07 mass % addition of zinc stearate powder and mixing enough with a V type blender in 100% nitrogen-gas-atmosphere mind to this powder, it pulverized with jet mill equipment. The ambient atmosphere at the time of grinding was made into the inside of the nitrogen-gas-atmosphere mind which mixed 4000 ppm oxygen. Then, it mixed enough with the V type blender in 100% nitrogen-gas-atmosphere mind again. The oxygen density of the obtained fine particles is 2500 ppm, and from analysis of the carbon concentration of fine particles, the zinc stearate powder currently mixed by fine particles was calculated as it is 0.05 mass %. Moreover, as a result of measuring with a laser diffraction type particle-size-distribution measurement machine, the average grain size D50 of 5.10 micrometers and D10 was [2.10 micrometers and D90] 8.62 micrometers.

[0051] Next, press molding of the obtained fine particles was carried out with the briquetting machine in a horizontal magnetic field in 100% nitrogen-gas-atmosphere mind. Molding pressure is 1.2 t/cm2 and the field in the cavity of metal mold was set to 15kOe(s). It holds at 500 degrees C among the vacuum of 1.33x10-5hPa for 1 hour, and subsequently, among the vacuum of 1.33x10-5hPa, and after holding the acquired molding object at 800 degrees C for 2 hours, it was held to the pan for 2 hours, and it was made to sinter it at 1050 degrees C among the vacuum of 1.33x10-5hPa. Sintered density is three or more [7.5g //cm], and turned into a consistency of sufficient magnitude. Furthermore, this

sintered compact was heat-treated at 560 degrees C among argon atmosphere for 1 hour, and the sintered magnet was produced.

[0052] The result of having measured the magnetic properties of this sintered magnet by the direct-current BH curve tracer is shown in Table 1. Moreover, the oxygen density and grain size of fines of a sintered magnet are also shown in Table 1. [of a raw material]

[0053] (Examples 3 and 4 of a comparison) The alloy flake obtained in the examples 1 and 2 of a comparison was ground by the same approach as an example 3, and fines were obtained. The sintered magnet was produced through the process of the still more nearly same molding as an example 3, and sintering. However, since it was hard coming to sinter the fines obtained from the alloy flake of the examples 1 and 2 of a comparison, they raised sintering temperature by 20 degrees C. Let the results of the sintered magnet using the alloy flake of the examples 1 and 2 of a comparison be the examples 3 and 4 of a comparison, respectively.

[0054] The result of having measured the magnetic properties of these sintered magnets by the direct-current BH curve tracer is shown in Table 1. Moreover, the oxygen density and grain size of fines of each sintered magnet are also shown in Table 1. [of a raw material]

[0055]

[Table 1]

Î						磁石		
١		酸素濃度		度(μ	m)	Br	iHc	(BH)max
1		(ppm)	D10	D50	D90	(kG)	(kOe)	(MGOe)
1	実施例3	2500	2.1	5.1	8.6	13.6	14.5	44.7
	比較例3	3300	1.6	4.9	8.8	13.5	13.6	43.6
	比較例4	3100	1.8	5.0	8.8	13.6	13.9	44.2
	実施例4	-		-	-	9.1	13.5	18.1
r	比較例5			-	-	9.1	12.6	17.5

[0056] As shown in Table 1, in the examples 3 and 4 of a comparison, the fact that D10 is small shows that the rate of very fine powder smaller than about 1 micrometer is large as compared with an example 3. Such a very fine grain tends to oxidize and the oxygen density of fines is high a little rather than the example

3 in the examples 3 and 4 of a comparison. Big and rough-ization of the crystal grain by the magnetic properties of the magnet of the examples 3 and 4 of a comparison having stopped being able to sinter a low cause easily due to the increment in an oxygen density, and having raised sintering temperature by 20 degrees C as compared with the example 3, is considered to be the main factor. [0057] Next, the example which produced the bond magnet is explained. (Example 4) The raw material was blended so that an alloy presentation might become Nd28.5%, B:1.00 mass %, Co:10.0 mass %, Ga:0.5 mass %, and remainder iron, and the alloy flake was cast in the same conditions as an example 1 by the SC method. As a result of estimating the obtained alloy flake as an example 1 similarly, the rate of the volume of 9 micrometers and a detailed R rich phase field of the surface roughness of a mold side side front face is 3% or less in the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz), and alpha-Fe did not contain.

[0058] After holding the above-mentioned alloy flake at 820 degrees C among the hydrogen of one atmospheric pressure for 1 hour, HDDR processing held under vacuum at this temperature for 1 hour was carried out. The obtained alloy powder was ground by BURAUMMIRU to 150 micrometers or less, the epoxy resin of 2.5 mass % was added, the magnetic field of 1.5T was added and pressed, and the bond magnet was obtained. The magnetic properties of the obtained bond magnet are shown in Table 1.

[0059] (Example 5 of a comparison) The raw material was blended with the same presentation as an example 4, and the dissolution and casting by the SC method were carried out like the example 1 of a comparison. As a result of estimating the obtained alloy flake as an example 1 similarly, the rate of the volume of 3.1 micrometers and a detailed R rich phase field of the surface roughness of a mold side side front face was 40% in the ten-point average of roughness height (Rz). [0060] Subsequently, the bond magnet was produced by the same approach as an example 4. The magnetic properties of the obtained bond magnet are shown in Table 1.

[0061] With the bond magnet of this example 4 and the example 5 of a comparison, Table 1 shows that the magnetic properties of this example 4 are excellent. In the example 5 of a comparison, the rate of the volume of a detailed R rich field is high, and after HDDR processing or grinding, since there are many amounts of a comparatively fine grain 50 micrometers or less, what has low magnetism can be presumed.

[0062]

[Effect of the Invention] The alloy flake of this invention has few rates of the volume of a detailed R rich field, and its homogeneity of the distributed condition of R rich phase in an alloy is still better than the conventional SC material. therefore, the sintered magnet manufactured from this alloy flake and HDDR -- the bond magnet by law discovers the magnet property superior to the conventional thing.

[Translation done.]

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DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[Drawing 1] It is drawing showing the cross-section organization of the alloy flake for rare earth magnets containing the detailed R rich phase manufactured by the

conventional SC method.

[Drawing 2] It is drawing showing the cross-section organization of the alloy flake for rare earth magnets concerning this invention.

[Drawing 3] It is drawing which drew the line on the boundary of the detailed R rich field and the normal section in the cross-section organization of drawing 1. [Drawing 4] It is the mimetic diagram of the casting equipment of the strip cast

method.

[Description of Notations]

- 1 Refractories Crucible
- 2 Tundish
- 3 Roll Kneader for Casting
- 4 Alloy
- 5 Uptake Container

[Translation done.]

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DRAWINGS

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[Drawing 1]

図1.左:衡型面側、右自由面側

[Drawing 2]

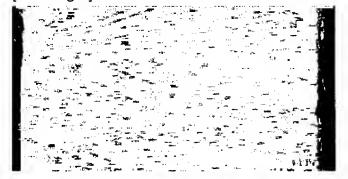


図2. 左: 鋳型面側、右自由面側

[Drawing 3]

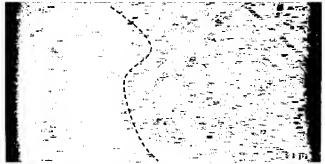
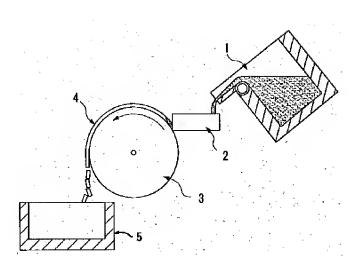


図 3. 点線から左側が微細Rリッチ領域

[Drawing 4]



[Translation done.]

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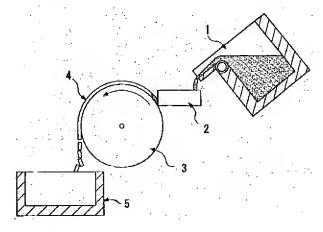
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(54) 【発明の名称】 希土類磁石用合金轉片、その製造方法、希土類焼結磁石用合金粉末、希土類焼結磁石、ボンド磁 石用合金粉末およびボンド磁石

(57)【要約】 (修正有)

【課題】鋳造されたR-T-B系合金塊中での微細Rリッチ相領域の生成を抑制し、均質性に優れた組織を有する合金塊を製造することにより、磁石中のRリッチ相の分布を均質とし、磁石特性の優れた希土類磁石を提供する。

【解決手段】鋳造用回転ロール3の表面に細かな凸凹を 形成し、合金の溶湯1の粘性により、溶湯が鋳造用回転 ロール表面の細かな凸凹に完全には入り込まないように する。その結果、合金4の鋳型面側が過度に急冷される ことがなくなり、微細Rリッチ相領域の生成が抑制でき る



【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】R-T-B系合金(但し、RはYを含む希土類元素のうち少なくとも1種、TはFeを必須とする遷移金属、Bは硼素である。)からなる希土類磁石用合金薄片において、厚さが0.1mm以上0.5mm以下であり、該合金薄片の少なくとも片面の表面粗さが十点平均粗さ(Rz)で5μm以上50μm以下であることを特徴とする希土類磁石用合金薄片。

【請求項2】該合金薄片の少なくとも片面の表面粗さが 十点平均粗さ(Rz)で7μm以上25μm以下であることを特徴とする請求項1に記載の希土類磁石用合金薄 片。

【請求項3】合金中の微細Rリッチ相領域の体積率が2 0%以下であることを特徴とする請求項1又は2に記載 の希土類磁石用合金薄片。

【請求項4】ストリップキャスト法によるR-T-B系合金からなる希土類磁石用合金薄片の製造方法において、鋳造用回転ロールの鋳造面の表面粗さを十点平均粗さ(Rz)で5μm以上100μm以下とすることを特徴とする希土類磁石用合金薄片の製造方法。

【請求項5】ストリップキャスト法によるR-T-B系合金からなる希土類磁石用合金薄片の製造方法において、鋳造用回転ロールの鋳造面の表面粗さを十点平均粗さ(Rz)で5μm以上100μm以下とすることを特徴とする請求項1ないし3に記載の希土類磁石用合金薄片の製造方法。

【請求項6】鋳造用回転ロールの鋳造面の表面粗さを十点平均粗さ(Rz)で10μm以上50μm以下とすることを特徴とする請求項4または5に記載の希土類磁石用合金薄片の製造方法。

【請求項7】請求項1ないし3に記載の希土類磁石用合金薄片に水素解砕工程を施した後にジェットミル粉砕することで作製される希土類焼結磁石用合金粉末。

【請求項8】請求項7に記載の希土類磁石用合金粉末から粉末冶金法で製造される希土類焼結磁石。

【請求項9】請求項1ないし3に記載の希土類磁石用合金薄片を用いて、HDDR法で製造したボンド磁石用合金粉末。

【請求項10】請求項9に記載のボンド磁石用合金粉末 を用いて作製されるボンド磁石。

【発明の詳細な説明】

[0001]

【発明の属する技術分野】本発明はR-T-B系合金 (但し、RはYを含む希土類元素のうち少なくとも 1 種、TはFeを必須とする遷移金属、Bは硼素であ る。)からなる希土類磁石用合金薄片、その製造方法、 希土類焼結磁石用合金粉末、希土類焼結磁石、ボンド磁 石用合金粉末およびボンド磁石に関する。

[0002]

【従来の技術】近年、希土類磁石用合金としてNd-F

e-B系合金がその高特性から急激に生産量を伸ばしており、HD(ハードディスク)用、MRI(磁気共鳴映像法)用あるいは、各種モーター用等に使用されている。通常は、Ndの一部をPr、Dy等の他の希土類元素で置換したものや、Feの一部をCo、Ni等の他の遷移金属で置換したものが一般的であり、NdーFe-B系合金を含め、R-T-B系合金と総称されている。ここで、RはYを含む希土類元素のうち少なくとも1種である。また、TはFeを必須とする遷移金属であり、Feの一部をCoあるいはNiで置換することができ、添加元素としてCu、A1、Ti、V、Cr、Mn、Nb、Ta、Mo、W、Ca、Sn、Zr、Hfなどを1種または複数組み合わせて添加してもよい。Bは硼素であり、一部をCまたはNで置換できる。

【0003】R-T-B系合金は、磁化作用に寄与する強磁性相である R_2 T $_{14}$ B相からなる結晶を主相とし、非磁性で希土類元素の濃縮した低融点のR-リッチ相が共存する合金で、活性な金属であることから一般に真空又は不活性ガス中で溶解や鋳造が行われる。また、鋳造されたR-T-B系合金塊から粉末冶金法によって焼結磁石を作製するには、合金塊を3 μ m (FSSS:フィッシャーサブシーブサイザーでの測定)程度に粉砕して合金粉末にした後、磁場中でプレス成形し、焼結炉で約1000-1100-00高温にて焼結し、その後必要に応じ熱処理、機械加工し、さらに耐食性を向上するためにメッキを施し、焼結磁石とするのが普通である。

【0004】R-T-B系合金からなる焼結磁石において、R-リッチ相は、以下のような重要な役割を担っている。

- 1) 融点が低く、焼結時に液相となり、磁石の高密度 化、従って磁化の向上に寄与する。
- 2) 粒界の凹凸を無くし、逆磁区のニュークリエーションサイトを減少させ保磁力を高める。
- 3)主相を磁気的に絶縁し保磁力を増加する。

従って、成形した磁石中のRーリッチ相の分散状態が悪いと局部的な焼結不良、磁性の低下をまねくため、成形した磁石中にRーリッチ相が均一に分散していることが重要となる。ここでRーリッチ相の分布は、鋳造された際のR-T-B系合金塊の組織に大きく影響される。

【0005】また、R-T-B系合金の鋳造において生じるもう一つの問題は、鋳造された合金塊中にα-Feが生成することである。α-Feは、合金塊を粉砕する際の粉砕効率の悪化をもたらし、また焼結後も磁石中に残存すれば、磁石の磁気特性の低下をもたらす。そこで従来の合金塊では、必要に応じ高温で長時間にわたる均質化処理を行い、α-Feの消去を行っていた。

【0006】この鋳造されたR-T-B系合金塊中にα-Feが生成する問題を解決するため、より速い冷却速度で合金塊を鋳造する方法として、ストリップキャスト法(SC法と略す。)が開発され実際の工程に使用され

ている。SC法は内部が水冷された銅ロール上に溶湯を流し、0.1~1mm程度の薄片を鋳造することにより、合金を急冷凝固させるものであり、α-Feの析出を抑制することができる。さらに合金塊の結晶組織が微細化するため、Rーリッチ相が微細に分散した組織を有する合金を生成することが可能となる。このように、SC法で鋳造された合金は、内部のRーリッチ相が微細に分散しているため、粉砕、焼結後の磁石中のRーリッチ相の分散性も良好となり、磁石の磁気特性の向上に成功している。(特開平5-222488号公報、特開平5-295490号公報)

【0007】またSC法により鋳造された合金塊は、組織の均質性も優れている。組織の均質性は、結晶粒径やRリッチ相の分散状態で比較することが出来る。SC法で作製した合金薄片では、合金薄片の鋳造用ロール側(以降、鋳型面側とする)にチル晶が発生することもあるが、全体として急冷凝固でもたらされる適度に微細で均質な組織を得ることが出来る。

【0008】以上のように、SC法で鋳造したR-T-B系合金は、Rリッチ相が微細に分散し、α-Feの生成も抑制されているため、焼結磁石を作製する場合には、最終的な磁石中のRリッチ相の均質性が高まり、またα-Feに起因する粉砕、磁性への弊害を防止することができる。このように、SC法で鋳造したR-T-B系合金塊は、焼結磁石を作製するため優れた組織を有している。しかし、磁石の特性が向上するにつれて、ますます原料合金塊の組織に均質性の向上が求められるようになってきている。

【0009】そのため、例えば特開平10-31711 0号公報には、鋳造されたR-T-B系合金の鋳型面側 のチル晶の面積比率を5%以下にすることで、磁石特性 の良好な焼結磁石を作製している技術が開示されてい る。チル晶部は粉砕工程で粒径1μm以下の微細粉末と なるため、合金粉末の粒度分布を乱し、磁性を悪化させ ると考えられている。

[0010]

【発明が解決しようとする課題】本発明者らは、鋳造されたR-T-B系合金塊の組織と、水素解砕や微粉砕の際の挙動との関係を研究した結果、焼結磁石用の合金粉末の粒度を均一に制御するためには、合金塊の結晶粒径よりもRリッチ相の分散状態を制御することが重要であることを見出した。そして、合金塊中のチル晶の体積率は現実には数%以下であり、チル晶による弊害よりも、合金塊中の鋳型面側に生成されるRリッチ相の分散状態が極端に細かな領域(微細Rリッチ相領域)の方が、磁石用粉末の粒度を制御するためには影響が大きいことを見出した。すなわち、合金塊の組成や製造条件によりR-T-B系合金塊中のチル晶を少なくした場合でも、微細Rリッチ相領域の体積率が50%を超える場合もあること、そしてこの微細Rリッチ相領域が磁石用合金粉末

の粒度分布を乱すことを確認し、微細Rリッチ相領域を 減少させることが磁石特性を向上させるために必要であ ることを確認した。

【0011】そこで本発明は、鋳造されたR-T-B系合金塊中での微細Rリッチ相領域の生成を抑制し、均質性に優れた組織を有する合金塊を製造することにより、磁石中のRリッチ相の分布を均質とし、磁石特性の優れた希土類磁石を提供することを目的とする。

[0012]

【課題を解決するための手段】本発明者らは、SC法における鋳造条件、特に鋳造用回転ロールの表面状態を変更し、R-T-B系合金薄片中の微細Rリッチ相領域が生成する体積率を比較した。すると合金薄片の鋳型面側表面の表面粗さと微細Rリッチ相領域が生成する体積率に関係があることを見出した。本発明は、本発明者らが上記の知見に基づき為したものである。

【0013】すなわち本発明は、

- (1) R-T-B系合金(但し、RはYを含む希土類元素のうち少なくとも1種、TはFeを必須とする遷移金属、Bは硼素。)からなる希土類磁石用合金薄片において、厚さが0.1mm以上0.5mm以下であり、該合金薄片の少なくとも片面の表面粗さが十点平均粗さ(Rz)で5μm以上50μm以下であることを特徴とする希土類磁石用合金薄片。
- (2)該合金薄片の少なくとも片面の表面粗さが十点平均粗さ(Rz)で7μm以上25μm以下であることを特徴とする上記(1)に記載の希土類磁石用合金薄片。
- (3)合金中の微細Rリッチ相領域の体積率が20%以下であることを特徴とする上記(1)又は(2)に記載の希土類磁石用合金薄片。
- (4)ストリップキャスト法によるR-T-B系合金からなる希土類磁石用合金薄片の製造方法において、鋳造用回転ロールの鋳造面の表面粗さを十点平均粗さ(Rz)で5μm以上100μm以下とすることを特徴とする希土類磁石用合金薄片の製造方法。
- (5)ストリップキャスト法によるR-T-B系合金からなる希土類磁石用合金薄片の製造方法において、鋳造用回転ロールの鋳造面の表面粗さを十点平均粗さ(Rz)で5μm以上100μm以下とすることを特徴とする上記(1)ないし(3)に記載の希土類磁石用合金薄片の製造方法。
- (6) 鋳造用回転ロールの鋳造面の表面粗さを十点平均 粗さ(Rz)で10μm以上50μm以下とすることを特 徴とする上記(4)または(5)に記載の希土類磁石用 合金薄片の製造方法。
- (7)上記(1)ないし(3)に記載の希土類磁石用合金薄片に水素解砕工程を施した後にジェットミル粉砕することで作製される希土類焼結磁石用合金粉末。
- (8)上記(7)に記載の希土類磁石用合金粉末から粉末冶金法で製造される希土類焼結磁石。

(9)上記(1)ないし(3)に記載の希土類磁石用合金薄片を用いて、HDDR法で製造したボンド磁石用合金粉末。

(10)上記(9)に記載のボンド磁石用合金粉末を用いて作製されるボンド磁石。

である。

[0014]

【発明の実施の形態】従来のSC法により鋳造されたN d-Fe-B系合金(Nd31.5質量%)の薄片の断 面をSEM(走査電子顕微鏡)にて観察した時の反射電 子像を図1に示す。図1で左側が鋳型面側、右側が自由 面側である。なお、この合金薄片の鋳型面側表面の表面 粗さは十点平均粗さ(R z)で3. 4μmである。図1で 白い部分が、Ndーリッチ相(RがNdになっているた めR-リッチ相をNd-リッチ相と呼ぶ。)で、合金薄 片の中央部から自由面側(鋳造面側と反対側の表面)で は、厚さ方向にラメラー状に伸びるか、ラメラーが分断 したような方向性を持った形の小さなプールを形成して いる。しかし、鋳型面側にはNd-リッチ相が他の部位 よりも極端に微細な粒状で、かつランダムに存在する領 域が生成しており、これを本発明者らは微細Rリッチ相 領域(Rの主成分がNdの際は微細Ndリッチ相領域と も呼ぶ)と名づけ、特に区別することとした。この微細 Rリッチ相領域は通常鋳型面側から始まり、中央方向へ 広がっている。これに対し中央部から自由面側にかけて の微細Rリッチ相領域が存在しない部分を、ここでは正 常部と呼ぶこととする。

【0015】焼結磁石作製時のR-T-B系合金薄片の水素解砕工程において、水素はRリッチ相から吸収され、膨張し脆い水素化物となる。したがって、水素解砕では、合金中にRリッチ相に沿った、或いはRリッチ相を起点とした微細なクラックが導入される。その後の微粉砕工程で、水素解砕で生成した多量の微細クラックをきっかけに合金が壊れるため、合金中のRリッチ相の分散が細かいほど微粉砕後の粒度は細かくなる傾向がある。したがって、微細Rリッチ相領域は、正常部よりも細かく割れる傾向が強く、例えば正常部から製造された合金粉末では、平均粒度がFSSS(フィッシャー サブシーブ サイザー)での測定で3μm程度であるのに対して、微細Rリッチ相領域から製造された合金粉末では、1μm以下の微粉を含む割合が高いため、微粉砕後の粒度分布が広くなることになる。

【0016】R-T-B系合金中のRリッチ相の分散状態は、鋳造時における溶湯が凝固した後の冷却速度の制御、或いは熱処理によって制御可能であることは特開平09-170055号公報、或いは特開平10-36949号公報に記載されている。しかし、凝固後の冷却速度、或いは熱処理による微細Rリッチ相領域内部のRリッチ相の変化の挙動は、正常部と異なり制御が困難であり、Rリッチ相の分散が粗くなりにくく、微細なままで

ある。

【0017】微細Rリッチ相領域の体積率は次のような方法で測定可能である。図3は図1と同じ視野の反射電子線像であるが、微細Rリッチ相領域と正常部の境界に線を引いたものである。両領域の境界は、Rリッチ相の分散状態から容易に判断できるため、画像解析装置を用いてその視野の微細Rリッチ相領域の面積率を計算することが出来る。断面での面積率は、合金中での体積率に対応する。なお、微細Rリッチ相領域の体積率の測定において、同時に鋳造された合金薄片であっても、微細Rリッチ相領域の量の変化は、薄片間同士、また同じ薄片内でも大きい。そのため、50~100倍程度の低倍率で観察視野を広げた上で、5~10枚程度の薄片を測定しその平均を取ることで、その合金全体の微細Rリッチ相領域の体積率を計算することが出来る。

【0018】本発明のR-T-B系合金薄片(Nd3 1.5質量%)の断面の反射電子線像を図2に示す。図 2で左側が鋳型面側、右側が自由面側である。本発明の 合金薄片の特徴は、ストリップキャスト法で製造された 薄片において、鋳型面側の表面粗さを制御することによって、微細Rリッチ相領域の生成が抑制されていること である。図2に示すように、本発明の合金薄片では、鋳型面側に微細Rリッチ相領域は存在せず、鋳型面から自由面に渡ってRリッチ相の分散状態が極めて均質である。

【0019】ストリップキャスト法で製造された合金薄片の鋳型面側表面の表面粗さと微細Rリッチ相領域の関係は以下のように説明できる。合金薄片の鋳型面側表面が平滑であるためには、鋳造用回転ロール表面が平滑で、合金溶湯との濡れ性が良好である必要がある。このような状態では、溶湯から鋳型への熱伝達が極めて良好(熱伝達係数が大きい)であり、合金の鋳型面側が過度に急冷される。微細Rリッチ相領域は、鋳型と溶湯の熱伝達係数が大きく合金の鋳型面側が過度に急冷される場合に生成される傾向が強いと考えられる。

【0020】一方、鋳造用回転ロールの表面に細かな凸凹を形成すると、合金の溶湯の粘性のため、溶湯は鋳造用回転ロール表面の細かな凸凹に完全には入り込めず、未接触の部分を生じ、熱伝達係数が低下する。その結果、合金の鋳型面側が過度に急冷されることがなくなり、微細Rリッチ相領域の生成が抑制できると考えられる。ここで鋳造用回転ロール表面の表面粗さを大きくすると、合金薄片の鋳型面側に多少なりともその凸凹が転写されるため、合金薄片の鋳型面側表面の表面粗さも当然大きくなる。鋳型面側表面が適当な表面粗さを有する合金薄片で、Rリッチ相の生成が抑制される原因は、上記のように溶湯が凝固する時の過度の熱伝達が抑制されているためと推定される。

【0021】しかし、鋳造用回転ロール表面の表面粗さが過度に大きくなると、溶湯が表面の凸凹に入り込める

ようになり、熱伝達係数が再び大きくなると同時に、生成した合金薄片の鋳型面側の表面粗さがさらに大きくなる。この場合には、微細Rリッチ相領域の体積率も再び増加するようになる。

【0022】従来のSC法でも図2に示すような均質な組織を有する合金薄片はある程度含まれていたが、図1に示すような微細Rリッチ相領域を多量に含んだ薄片も同時に生成されてしまうため、結果として合金全体での組織の均質性に問題を生じていた。このような従来のSC法で作製した合金組織のばらつきは、微妙な鋳造用回転ロールの表面状態、溶湯の供給状態、雰囲気など、ロール表面と溶湯との接触状態の違いに起因するものと考えられる。これに対して本発明では、鋳造用回転ロールの表面に適当な大きさの凸凹を形成したため、溶湯が凝固する時の過度の熱伝達が無くなり、微細Rリッチ相領域の生成を再現良く抑制することができる。その結果、図2に示すような均質な組織を有する合金薄片を高い収率で製造することができるようになった。

【0023】さらに本発明の詳細を説明する。

(1) ストリップキャスト法

本発明はストリップキャスト法で鋳造された希土類磁石 用のR-T-B系合金薄片に関するものである。ここで は、R-T-B系合金のストリップキャスト法による鋳 造について説明する。図4にストリップキャスト法によ る鋳造のための装置の模式図を示す。通常、R-T-B 系合金は、その活性な性質のため真空または不活性ガス 雰囲気中で、耐火物ルツボ1を用いて溶解される。溶解 された合金の溶湯は1350~1500℃で所定の時間 保持された後、必要に応じて整流機構、スラグ除去機構 を設けたタンディッシュ2を介して、内部を水冷された 鋳造用回転ロール3に供給される。溶湯の供給速度と回 転ロールの回転数は、求める合金の厚さに応じて適当に 制御させる。一般に回転ロールの回転数は、周速度にし て1~3m/s程度である。鋳造用回転ロールの材質 は、熱伝導性がよく入手が容易である点から銅、或いは 銅合金が適当である。回転ロールの材質やロールの表面 状態によっては、鋳造用回転ロールの表面にメタルが付 着しやすいため、必要に応じて清掃装置を設置すると、 鋳造されるR-T-B系合金の品質が安定する。回転ロ ール上で凝固した合金4はタンディッシュの反対側でロ ールから離脱し、捕集コンテナ5で回収される。この捕 集コンテナに加熱、冷却機構を設けることで正常部のR リッチ相の組織の状態を制御できる。

【0024】本発明の合金薄片の厚さは、0.1mm以上0.5mm以下とするのが好ましい。合金薄片の厚さが0.1mmより薄いと凝固速度が過度に増加し、結晶粒径が細かくなりすぎ、磁石化工程での微粉砕粒度近くになるため、磁石の配向率、磁化の低下を招くという問題がある。また合金薄片の厚さが0.5mmより厚いと凝固速度低下によるNd-rich相の分散性の低下、

α - Feの析出などの問題を招く。

【0025】(2)鋳造用回転ロールの鋳造面の表面粗 さ

本発明においては、ストリップキャスト法でR-T-B 系磁石合金を鋳造する場合、鋳造用回転ロールの鋳造面 の表面粗さを、十点平均粗さ(Rz)で5μm以上10 Oμm以下とする。ここで表面粗さとは、JIS B 0601 表面粗さの定義と表示」に示される条件で測定 したもので、十点平均粗さ(Rz)もその中に定義され ている。具体的にはまず、測定面に直角な平面で切断し たときの切り口(断面曲線)から、所定の波長より長い 表面うねり成分を位相補償型高域フィルタ等で除去した 曲線(粗さ曲線)を求める。その粗さ曲線から、その平 均線の方向に基準長さだけ抜き取り、この抜き取り部分 の平均線から、最も高い山頂から5番目までの山頂の標 高 (Yp) の絶対値の平均値と、最も低い谷底から5番 目までの谷底の標高(Yv)の絶対値の平均値との和を 十点平均粗さ(Rz)と呼ぶ。基準長さ等の測定パラメ ータは、表面粗さに対して標準値が上記J I Sで指定さ れている。合金薄片の鋳型面側の表面粗さは、変動が大 きい場合もあり、少なくとも5枚の薄片について測定 し、その平均値を使用すべきである。表面粗さが5μm 以下では鋳造用回転ロール表面の凸凹の効果が得られ ず、溶湯との接触が良好なため熱伝達係数が大きい。そ の結果、合金中に微細Rリッチ相領域を生成しやすくな る。一方、鋳造用回転ロールの表面粗さが5 μm以上で あると、合金溶湯の粘性のため、溶湯は回転ロールの表 面の細かな凸凹に完全には入り込めず、未接触の部分を 生じ、熱伝達係数が低下する。その結果、合金中での微 細Rリッチ相の生成を抑制することができる。表面粗さ は、十点平均粗さ(Rz)で10μm以上であるとさら に好ましい。

【0026】鋳造用回転ロールの表面粗さが100μmを超えると、回転ロール表面の凸凹の深さが増すと共に、一般に凸凹間の間隔も大きくなるため、溶湯が回転ロールの表面に沿って隙間無く入り込めるようになる。そのため、熱伝達係数が再び過度に大きくなり易く、合金中に微細Rリッチ相領域を生成し易くなる。そのため鋳造用回転ロールの表面粗さは、100μm以下、好ましくは50μm以下とする。

【0027】R-T-B系合金薄片の表面粗さ本発明においては、希土類磁石用のR-T-B系合金薄片の少なくとも片面の表面粗さが、十点平均粗さ(Rz)で5μm以上50μm以下であることを特徴とする。表面に上記の粗さの凸凹が形成される面は、ストリップキャスト法で鋳造する際に凝固が始まる鋳型面側表面であり、回転ロールの表面の凸凹が反映された表面となる。上記した通り、この表面の表面粗さが5μm以下或いは50μm以上では、微細Rリッチ相領域が生成する体積率が大きくなり、合金中のRリッチ相の分散状態

の不均一をもたらす。その結果、焼結磁石の製造工程で 微粉砕後の合金粉末の粒度分布を広くし、磁石の特性を 悪化するため好ましくない。本発明において合金薄片の 片面の表面粗さは、5μm以上50μm以下、さらに好 ましくは7μm以上25μm以下とする。

【0028】合金中の微細Rリッチ相領域の体積率本発明では、R-T-B系合金中の微細Rリッチ相領域の体積率は20%以下となる。その結果、焼結磁石の工程で微粉砕後の合金粉末の粒度分布が狭く揃ったものになるため、特性にバラツキのない均質な焼結磁石を得ることができる。

【0029】希土類焼結磁石用合金粉末、希土類焼結磁石の製造方法

本発明により鋳造したR-T-B系合金からなる希土類 磁石用合金薄片からは、粉砕、成型、焼結の工程を経 て、高特性の異方性焼結磁石を製造することができる。 【0030】合金薄片の粉砕は、通常、水素解砕、微粉 砕の順で行なわれ、3μm (FSSS)程度の合金粉末 が作製される。ここで、水素解砕は、前工程の水素吸蔵 工程と後工程の脱水素工程に分けられる。水素吸蔵工程 では、266hPa~0.3MPa·Gの圧力の水素ガ ス雰囲気で、主に合金薄片のRーリッチ相に水素を吸蔵 させ、この時に生成されるR-水素化物によりR-リッ チ相が体積膨張することを利用して、合金薄片自体を微 細に割るかあるいは無数の微細な割れ目を生じさせる。 この水素吸蔵は常温~600℃程度の範囲で実施される が、R-リッチ相の体積膨張を大きくして効率良く割る ためには、水素ガス雰囲気の圧力を高くすると共に、常 温~100℃程度の範囲で実施することが好ましい。好 ましい処理時間は1時間以上である。この水素吸蔵工程 により生成したR-水素化物は大気中では不安定であり 酸化され易いため、水素吸蔵処理の後、200~600 ℃程度で1.33hPa以下の真空中に合金薄片を保持 する脱水素処理を行なうことが好ましい。この処理によ り、大気中で安定なR-水素化物に変化させることがで きる。脱水素処理の好ましい処理時間は30分以上であ る。水素吸蔵後から焼結までの各工程で酸化防止のため の雰囲気管理がなされている場合は、脱水素処理を省く こともできる。

【0031】本発明のストリップキャスト法により製造されたR-T-B系合金薄片は、Rリッチ相が均一分散していることが特徴である。好ましいRリッチ相の間隔の平均値は、磁石の製造工程での粉砕粒度に依存するが、一般に3μmから8μmである。水素解砕では、Rリッチ相に沿って、或いはRリッチ相を起点にしてクラックが導入される。したがって、水素解砕してから微粉砕することで、合金中に均一かつ微細に分散したRリッチ相の効果を最大限に引き出すことが可能であり、非常に粒度分布の狭い合金粉末を効率良く生産することが可能である。この水素解砕の工程を行わずに焼結磁石を作

製した場合、作製された焼結磁石の特性は劣ったものとなる。(M. Sagawa et al. Proceedingof the 5th international conference on Advanced materials, Beijing China (1999))

【0032】微粉砕とは、R-T-B系合金薄片を3μm (FSSS)程度まで粉砕することである。微粉砕のための粉砕装置としては、生産性が良く、狭い粒度分布を得られることから、ジェットミル装置が最適である。本発明の微細Rリッチ相領域の少ない合金薄片を利用すれば、粒度分布が狭い合金粉末を高効率で、安定性良く作製することができる。微粉砕を行う際の雰囲気は、アルゴンガスや窒素ガスなどの不活性ガス雰囲気とする。これらの不活性ガス中に2質量%以下、好ましくは1質量%以下の酸素を混入させてもよい。このことにより粉砕効率が向上するとともに、粉砕後の合金粉末の酸素濃度を1000~10000ppmとすることができ、合金粉末を適度に安定化させることができる。また同時に、磁石を焼結する際の結晶粒の異常成長を抑制することができる。

【0033】上記の合金粉末を磁場中で成型する場合、合金粉末と金型内壁との摩擦を低減し、また粉末どうしの摩擦も低減させて配向性を向上させるため、粉末にはステアリン酸亜鉛等の潤滑剤を添加することが好ましい。好ましい添加量は0.01~1質量%である。潤滑材の添加は微粉砕前でも後でもよいが、磁場中成形前に、アルゴンガスや窒素ガスなどの不活性ガス雰囲気中でV型ブレンダー等を用いて十分に混合することが好ましい。

【0034】3μm (FSSS)程度まで粉砕された合金粉末は、磁場中成型機でプレス成型される。金型は、キャビティ内の磁界方向を考慮して、磁性材と非磁性材を組み合わせて作製される。成型圧力は0、5~2 t/cm²が好ましい。成型時のキャビティ内の磁界は5~20kOeが好ましい。また、成型時の雰囲気はアルゴンガスや窒素ガスなどの不活性ガス雰囲気が好ましいが、上述の耐酸化処理した粉体の場合、大気中でも可能である。また成形は、冷間静水圧成形(CIP:Cold Isostatic Press)或いはゴム型を利用した擬似静水圧プレス(RIP:Rubber Isostatic Press)でも可能である。CIPやRIPでは、静水圧的に圧縮されるため、成形時の配向の乱れが少なく、金型成形よりも配向率の増加が可能であり、最大磁気エネルギー積を増加することができる。

【0035】成型体の焼結は、1000~1100℃で行なわれる。焼結の雰囲気としては、アルゴンガス雰囲気または1、33×10⁻²hPa以下の真空雰囲気が好ましい。焼結温度での保持時間は1時間以上が好まし

い。また焼結の際には、焼結温度に到達する前に、成型体中の潤滑剤と合金粉末に含まれる水素はできるだけ除去しておく必要がある。潤滑剤の好ましい除去条件は、1、33×10⁻² h P a 以下の真空中または減圧したArフロー雰囲気中で、300~500℃で30分以上保持することである。また、水素の好ましい除去条件は、1、33×10⁻² h P a 以下の真空中で、700~900℃で30分以上保持することである。

【0036】焼結が終了した後、焼結磁石の保磁力向上のため、必要に応じて500~650℃で熱処理することができる。この場合の好ましい雰囲気は、アルゴンガス雰囲気または真空雰囲気であり、好ましい保持時間は30分以上である。

【0037】また、本発明で作製した微細Rリッチ領域の生成を抑制した希土類磁石用R-T-B系合金薄片は、焼結磁石以外に、ボンド磁石の作製のためにも好適に用いることができる。以下に、本発明の希土類磁石用合金薄片からボンド磁石を作製する場合について説明する。

【0038】本発明のR-T-B系合金薄片は、まず必要に応じて熱処理される。熱処理の目的は、合金中の α -Feの除去と結晶粒の粗大化である。ボンド磁石作製のための合金粉末の作製には、HDDR(Hydrogenation Disproportionation Desorption Recombination)処理を行うが、合金中に存在する α -FeはHDDR処理工程では消去させることができず、磁性を低下させる原因となる。そのため、 α -FeはHDDR処理を行う前に消去しておく必要がある。

【0039】また、ボンド磁石用の合金粉末の平均粒径は50~300μmと焼結磁石用の合金粉末と比較すると非常に大きい。HDDR法では、元の合金の結晶方位と、再結合したサブミクロンの結晶粒の方位がある一定の分布を持って一致する。そのため、原料の合金薄片中にある二つ以上の結晶方位の異なる結晶粒が、一つのボンド磁石用合金粉末に含まれてしまうと、合金粉末中に結晶方位が大きく異なる領域を含むこととなり、磁石の配向率が低下し、最大磁気エネルギー積が低下する。これを避けるためには、合金薄片中の結晶粒径は、大きい方が都合が良い。ストリップキャスト法のような急冷凝固法で鋳造した合金では、結晶粒径が比較的小さくなる傾向があるため、熱処理による結晶粒の粗大化は磁石特性の向上に有効である。

【0040】HDDR法によるボンド磁石用合金粉末の製造方法については、多くの報告がある(例えば、T. Takeshita et al, Proc. 10th Int. Workshop on RE magnets and theirapplication, Kyoto, Vol. 1 p551(1989))。HDDR法による合金粉末の作製は、以下のよ

うに行われる。

【0041】原料のR-T-B系合金薄片を水素雰囲気中で加熱すると、700℃から850℃程度で磁性相の R_2T_{14} B相が α - Fe、 RH_2 、Fe $_2$ Bの3相に分解する。次いで同程度の温度で、不活性ガス雰囲気、或いは真空雰囲気に切り替えて水素を除去すると、分解していた相がサブミクロン程度の結晶粒径を有する R_2T_{14} B相に再結合する。この際、合金の組成や処理条件を適当に制御すると、再結合した各 R_2T_{14} B相の磁化容易軸(R_2T_{14} B相C軸)は、分解前の原料合金中の R_2T_{14} B相のC軸とほぼ平行となり、各微細結晶粒の磁化容易動力向が揃った異方性磁石粉とすることができる。

【 0 0 4 2 】 H D D R 処理を施した合金は、50~30 0 μm程度に粉砕し合金粉末とした後、樹脂と混合して 圧縮成形、射出成形などを施しボンド磁石とすることできる。

【0043】微細Rリッチ相領域は上記した水素解砕処理同様に、HDDR処理の際にも微粉化する傾向が強い。HDDR法による磁粉の特性は、粒度が小さくなるとともに低下する。そのため、本発明の微細Rリッチ相の生成を抑制したR-T-B系合金は、HDDR処理でのボンド磁石用磁粉の作製に好適に用いることができる。

[0044]

【実施例】(実施例1)合金組成が、Nd:31.5質量%、B:1.00質量%、Co:1.0質量%、A1:0.30質量%、Cu:0.10質量%、残部鉄になるように、金属ネオジウム、フェロボロン、コバルト、アルミニウム、銅、鉄を配合した原料を、アルミナ坩堝を使用して、アルゴンガスで1気圧の雰囲気中で、高周波溶解炉で溶解し、溶湯をストリップキャスト法にて鋳造して、合金薄片を作製した。鋳造用回転ロールの直径は300mm、材質は純銅で、内部は水冷されており、鋳造面の表面粗さは十点平均粗さ(Rz)で20μmに調整した。鋳造時のロールの周速度は0.9m/sで、平均厚さ0.30mmの合金薄片を生成した。

【0045】得られた合金薄片の鋳型面側表面の表面粗さは、十点平均粗さ(Rz)で10μmであった。合金薄片を10枚埋め込み、研摩した後、走査型電子顕微鏡(SEM)で各合金薄片について反射電子線像(BE

I)を倍率100倍で撮影した。撮影した写真を画像解析装置に取り込み測定したところ、微細Rリッチ相領域の体積率は、3%以下であった。

【0046】(実施例2)合金組成が、Nd28.5%、B:1.00質量%、Co:1.0質量%、A1:0.30質量%、Cu:0.10質量%、残部鉄になるように配合した原料を使用して、実施例1と同様の条件でSC法で鋳造を行い、合金薄片を作製した。

【0047】得られた合金薄片を実施例1と同様に評価 した結果、鋳型面側表面の表面粗さは十点平均粗さ(R z) で 9 μ m で あ り、 微細 R リッチ相領域の体積率は、 3%以下で あった。

【0048】(比較例1)実施例1と同様の組成に原料を配合し、実施例1と同様にして溶解およびSC法による鋳造を実施した。但し、鋳造用回転ロール表面の表面粗さは十点平均粗さ(Rz)で3.0μmであった。得られた合金薄片を実施例1と同様に評価した結果、鋳型面側表面の表面粗さは十点平均粗さ(Rz)で3.3μmであり、微細Rリッチ相領域の体積率は、41%であった。

【0049】(比較例2)実施例1と同様の組成に原料を配合し、実施例1と同様にして溶解およびSC法による鋳造を実施した。但し、鋳造用回転ロール表面の表面粗さは十点平均粗さ(Rz)で120μmであった。得られた合金薄片を実施例1と同様に評価した結果、鋳型面側表面の表面粗さは十点平均粗さ(Rz)で86μmであり、微細Rリッチ相領域の体積率は、29%であった。

【0050】次に焼結磁石を作製した実施例を説明する。

(実施例3) 実施例1で得られた合金薄片を水素解砕し、ジェットミルで微粉砕した。水素解砕工程の前工程である水素吸蔵工程の条件は、100%水素雰囲気、2気圧で1時間保持とした。水素吸蔵反応開始時の金属片の温度は25℃であった。また後工程である脱水素工程の条件は、0.133hPaの真空中で、500℃で1時間保持とした。この粉末に、ステアリン酸亜鉛粉末を0.07質量%添加し、100%窒素雰囲気中でV型ブレンダーで十分混合した後、ジェットミル装置で微粉砕した。粉砕時の雰囲気は、4000ppmの酸素を混合した窒素雰囲気中とした。その後、再度、100%窒素雰囲気中でV型ブレンダーで十分混合した。得られた粉体の酸素濃度は2500ppmで、粉体の炭素濃度の分

析から、粉体に混合されているステアリン酸亜鉛粉末は0.05質量%であると計算された。また、レーザー回 析式粒度分布測定機で測定した結果、平均粒度D50は 5.10μ m、D10は 2.10μ m、D90は 8.62μ mであった。

【0051】次に、得られた粉体を100%窒素雰囲気中で横磁場中成型機でプレス成型した。成型圧は1.2 t/c m²であり、金型のキャビティ内の磁界は15k0eとした。得られた成型体を、1.33×10⁻⁵ hPaの真空中、500℃で1時間保持し、次いで1.33×10⁻⁵ hPaの真空中、800℃で2時間保持した後、さらに1.33×10⁻⁵ hPaの真空中、1050℃で2時間保持して焼結させた。焼結密度は7.5g/cm³以上であり十分な大きさの密度となった。さらに、この焼結体をアルゴン雰囲気中、560℃で1時間熱処理し、焼結磁石を作製した。

【0052】直流BHカーブトレーサーでこの焼結磁石の磁気特性を測定した結果を表1に示す。また、焼結磁石の原料の微粉の酸素濃度と粒度も表1に示す。

【0053】(比較例3、4)比較例1および2で得られた合金薄片を、実施例3と同様の方法で粉砕して微粉を得た。さらに実施例3と同様の成型、焼結の工程を経て、焼結磁石を作製した。ただし、比較例1および2の合金薄片から得られた微粉は焼結しにくくなったため、焼結温度を20℃上昇させた。比較例1および2の合金薄片をそれぞれ用いた焼結磁石の結果を比較例3、4とする。

【0054】直流BHカーブトレーサーでこれらの焼結 磁石の磁気特性を測定した結果を表1に示す。また、それぞれの焼結磁石の原料の微粉の酸素濃度と粒度も表1 に示す。

【0055】

【表1】

	微粉				磁石			
	酸素濃度	粒度(μ in)			Br	iHo	(BH)max	
	(ppm)	D10	D50	D90	(kG)	(kOe)	(MGOe)	
実施例3	2500	2.1	5.1	8.6	13.0	14.5	44.7	
比較例3	3300	1,6	4.9	8.8	13.5	13.6	43.6	
比較例4	3100	1.8	5.0	8.8	13.6	13.9	44.2	
実施例4	-	-	-	-	.9.1	13.5	18.1	
比較例5	-	-		-	- 9.1	12.6	17.5	

【0056】表1に示すように、比較例3、4では実施例3と比較してD10が小さいことから、1μm程度より小さい非常に細かい粉末の割合が大きい事がわかる。このような非常に細かい粒は酸化しやすく、比較例3、4では実施例3よりも微粉の酸素濃度が若干高くなっている。比較例3、4の磁石の磁気特性が実施例3と比較して低い原因は、酸素濃度増加によって焼結しにくくなり、焼結温度を20℃上昇させたことによる結晶粒の粗大化が主因と考えられる。

【0057】次にボンド磁石を作製した実施例を説明す

る

(実施例4)合金組成が、Nd28.5%、B:1.00質量%、Co:10.0質量%、Ga:0.5質量%、残部鉄になるように原料を配合し、実施例1と同様の条件でSC法により合金薄片を鋳造した。得られた合金薄片を実施例1と同様に評価した結果、鋳型面側表面の表面粗さは十点平均粗さ(Rz)で9μm、微細Rリッチ相領域の体積率は3%以下であり、α-Feは含んでいなかった。

【0058】上記の合金薄片を1気圧の水素中、820

℃で1時間保持した後、同温度で真空で1時間保持する HDDR処理を実施した。得られた合金粉を150μm 以下にブラウンミルで粉砕し、2.5質量%のエポキシ 樹脂を加えて1.5Tの磁場を加えて圧縮成形してボン ド磁石を得た。得られたボンド磁石の磁気特性を表1に 示す。

【0059】(比較例5)実施例4と同様の組成に原料を配合し、比較例1と同様にして溶解およびSC法による鋳造を実施した。得られた合金薄片を実施例1と同様に評価した結果、鋳型面側表面の表面粗さは十点平均粗さ(Rz)で3.1μm、微細Rリッチ相領域の体積率は、40%であった。

【0060】次いで、実施例4と同様の方法でボンド磁石を作製した。得られたボンド磁石の磁気特性を表1に示す。

【0061】表1から本実施例4と比較例5のボンド磁石では、本実施例4の磁気特性が優れていることがわかる。比較例5では、微細Rリッチ領域の体積率が高く、HDDR処理、または粉砕後に50μm以下の比較的細かい粒の量が多いために、磁性が低いものと推定できる。

[0062]

【発明の効果】本発明の合金薄片は、微細Rリッチ領域の体積率が少なく、合金中のRリッチ相の分散状態の均質性が、従来のSC材よりもさらに良好である。そのため、本合金薄片から製造した焼結磁石やHDDR法によるボンド磁石は、従来のものよりも優れた磁石特性を発現する。

【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】従来のSC法で製造した微細Rリッチ相を含む 希土類磁石用合金薄片の断面組織を示す図である。

【図2】本発明に係る希土類磁石用合金薄片の断面組織を示す図である。

【図3】図1の断面組織における微細Rリッチ領域と正常部との境界に線を引いた図である。

【図4】ストリップキャスト法の鋳造装置の模式図であ る.

【符号の説明】

- 1 耐火物ルツボ
- 2 タンディッシュ
- 3 鋳造用回転ロール
- 4 合金
- 5 捕集コンテナ

【図1】 【図2】

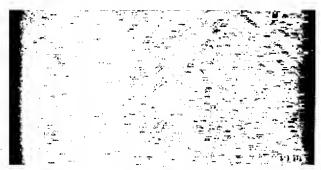


图1.左:衡型面侧、右自由面侧

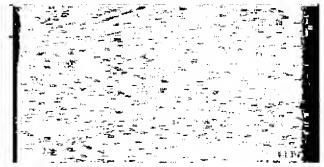


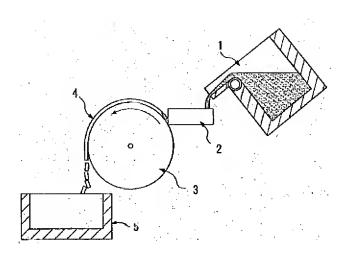
図2. 左: 佛型面側、右自由面側

【図3】



図 3. 点線から左側が微細Rリッラ領域

[34]



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